



Left, Chief Master Sgt. Daniel Birkhimer, 27th Civil Engineer Squadron, Canon Air Force Base, N.M., cuts sheet metal for prefabricated side walls. (Photos by Airman 1st Class James May III)

Right, Chief Master Sgt. Edwin Born, Headquarters, Air Education and Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, works on the new fire training facility.



Above, Tech. Sgt. Jeff Patterson, 101st CES, Bangor Air National Guard Base, Maine, trims the vinyl siding in the new building. The building will withstand 1,200-degree temperatures.

Left, Master Sgt. James Coho, 914th CES, Niagara Falls, N.Y., drills in the screws holding the siding.

Right, a view of the new building as seen from a cherry picker.



New fire training facility built to burn

**By Staff Sgt. Jim Bianchi
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The Nellis Fire Department will get a new firefighting and training facility in March, courtesy of Air Combat Command and 35 Reservists and national guardsmen. “ACC funds three projects a year in the command,” said Senior Master Sgt. David Harding, 1st Civil Engineer Squadron, Langley Air Force Base, Va. “These are projects bases can’t complete themselves. We bring a component team to the base to do these projects, usually in less than four weeks.” These construction projects generally cost about \$150,000 to complete, versus \$1.3 million if they were done by a contractor, said Sgt. Harding. “And we’re faster,” he added. Reservists and guardsmen from all over the United States go TDY to selected bases to repair roads, refurbish office buildings or, as at Nellis, build a fire-training facility. This year the team built a similar fire-training building at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, giving them a chance to practice before coming to Nellis. “This has been a pretty easy one for us,” said Captain Robert Wall, 7th CES, Dyess

Air Force Base Texas,. “We are even a little ahead of schedule.” The 1,600-square-foot facility is co-located with the aircraft mock-up also used for training. Both are on the perimeter road, just north of the 66th Rescue Squadron. The new building, designed to withstand a 1,200-degree fire, has three floors and an attic, both interior and exterior stairs and a four-foot wall on the roof for repelling down the 40-foot structure. “We even put in a four-by-four door frame on the top floor so firefighters can simulate chopping into a roof panel,” said Chief Master Sgt. Roger Buchanan, 1st CES. “It’s easy to replace, you just put in a new piece of wood.” The reservists are from all over the United States, and one, Chief Master Sgt. Ed Born, lives in Canada. “I’m assigned to Air Education and Training Command at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, but I live in a little town just north of Toronto,” said the chief. “When I left home (Canada) there was six feet of snow on the ground and it was zero degrees. The weather here has been fantastic!” The team will next go to Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., to build handicap access

ramps at the base theater and auditorium. The team brings all the hand tools they need in a metal container, much like a rail-road car. When opened it looks like a hardware and tool store. Anything large that is needed, like a backhoe or cherry picker, is provided by the host base. “The 99th CES and RED HORSE have been great. Whatever we need, from cars to equipment, they have been more than happy to provide,” said Chief Buchanan. The 30-year chief is retiring in October. He has a lot of great memories of these construction jobs. “We’ve been doing this since 1982,” he said. “It’s been a lot of fun.” With the addition of the new building, Team Nellis gains a valuable and much needed training facility, according to Tech. Sgt. Ramon Fitzgerald, NCO in charge of training. “With the addition of this building, it brings our capability up to a live-fire level we haven’t had before,” said Sgt. Fitzgerald. “In the past we’ve had to go downtown to Clark County for this type of experience. Coordination was difficult because we had to take our trucks downtown. Now we can train right on base. This is going to save us a lot of time and money.”